

66 percent of the clerical jobs we had and 47 percent of the blue collar jobs. So our workforce has a greater share of people who are professional, technical, and administrative than it did in the past."

DoD needs workers with increased technological skills, improved service orientation, the ability to adapt to change, and the capacity to do a broader range of things, Disney said.

But these skills are exactly what private industry is looking for also. "We're facing a particularly difficult challenge, ironically because the country is doing so well," Disney said. "With less than a 4-percent unemployment rate, it almost seems as if anybody who can fog a mirror can get a job. So we cannot continue to operate under the assumptions we had in the past."

Among those assumptions is the idea that the federal government offers stable, lifetime employment. "Ten-and-a-half years of downsizing can raise doubts about that," she said.

Another assumption is that DoD cannot compete financially with the private sector. "The growth of the high-technology fields has meant that private industry has dramatically raised the compensation packages it offers to people," Disney said. "As part of the federal government, we don't have the same latitude, but we do have some options such as recruitment bonuses and retention allowances."

DoD and the Services are ensuring that managers know these options exist. "They've not been widely used, but in some occupations they are clearly going to have to be," she said.

For years, supervisors have complained that hiring is too slow. "A private sector employer can meet you now and in five minutes give you an offer," Disney said. "The federal government can meet you now, and then you fill out its forms."

DoD is looking to simplify hiring by examining regulations and working with the Office of Personnel Management to suggest legislative changes, she said.

Finally, DoD is looking to better manage the workforce and ensure it has the right mix of skills at every location to meet its readiness needs. "We have been fortunate that Congress has helped us with buyout authority and retirement authority," Disney said. "These have helped us ensure workforce stability during some very difficult times. "However, we now need to look at the next generation of transition authorities," she continued.

Currently, the use of voluntary separation incentives and voluntary early retirements are tied to reductions-in-force, so the Department has to sacrifice a position to offer a buyout.

Buyouts have helped DoD meet milestones in downsizing to the right number of people, but not necessarily the right mix of occupations, she said.

"We need to be able to offer a buyout where appropriate, but still fill a position," Disney said. "We are working with other agencies and members of Congress to see if we can negotiate that kind of change. We need this change as soon as we can get it."

## DoD AWARDS GRANTS TO HISTORICALLY BLACK AND OTHER MINORITY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

**D**eputy Director of Defense Research and Engineering Delores Etter announced today [May 25, 2000] the award of grants totaling \$5.388 million to 31 historically black and other minority colleges and universities. These grants represent the final phase of the fiscal 2000 Department of Defense (DoD) Infrastructure Support Program. The grants will enhance programs and capabilities at these institutions in scientific disciplines critical to the national security of the DoD. Since 1992, the program has provided more than \$111 million to minority institutions for program enhancements in science, engineering, and mathematics. The program goals include increased participation of minority institutions in defense research and an increase in the number of minority graduates in the fields of science, engineering, and mathematics.

The grants were competitively selected from over 130 proposals submitted to the Army Research Office (ARO) and the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) in response to a Broad Agency Announcement issued in September 1999. The ARO and AFOSR will award equipment

grants ranging from \$35,000 to \$200,000 for one year. Research grants ranging from \$270,000 to \$572,000 will be awarded by AFOSR.

These 31 awards include 26 instrumentation grants and five research grants. Among the awardees are 13 historically black, 13 Hispanic, and five other minority colleges and universities. These include 17 awards by the AFOSR and 14 by ARO.

Awards will be made only after written agreements are reached between the Department and the institutions.

Details of the awards can be found at [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/fact\\_sheets/hbcuFY00awardslist1.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/fact_sheets/hbcuFY00awardslist1.html)

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